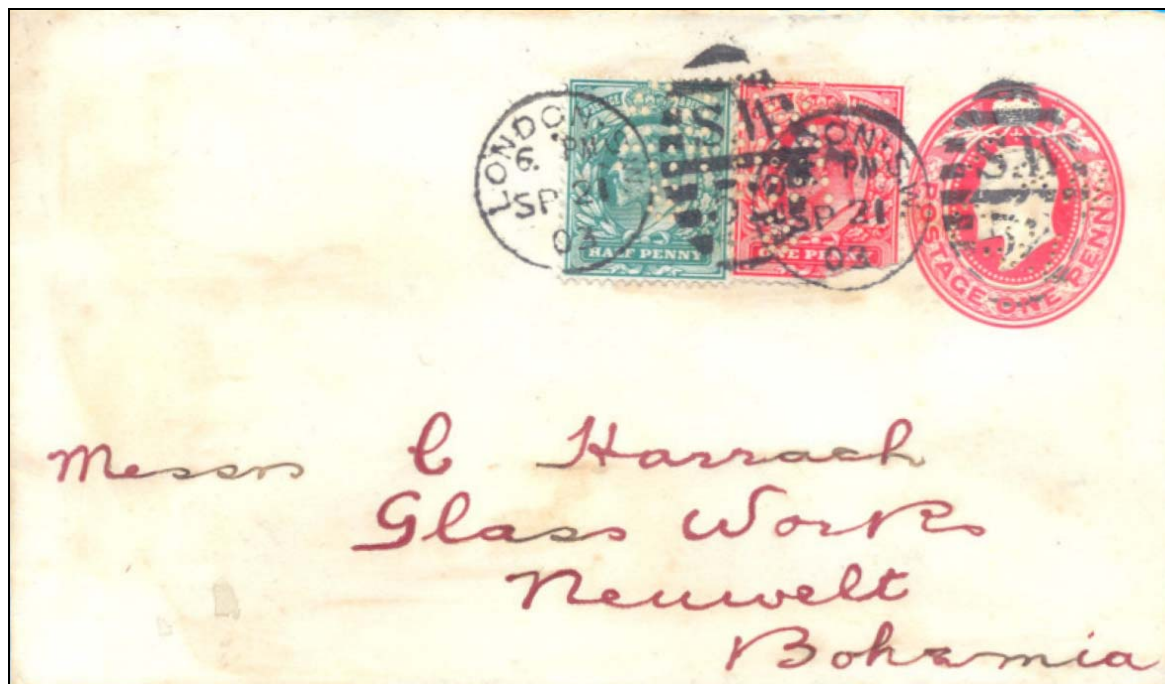


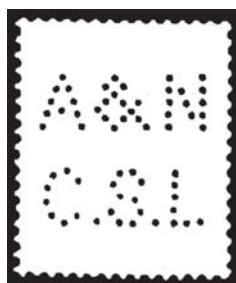
ARMY & NAVY CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY ONCE AGAIN

Wilhelm J. Verwoerd

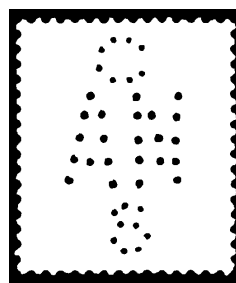
The Edwardian cover illustrated here is interesting, not only for the unusual destination, but also because it carries two different perfin belonging to the same firm. The dies are not rare.



The first perfin is A&N/C.S.L right through the red KEVII 1d Red imprint (and flap) of a postal stationary envelope. **Rosemary Smith** (Bull. 373 p.20) reported a similar envelope and perfin identified as A4205.05, but this one is definitely A4205.04 (4½ mm tall) which was in use between 1890 and 1912.



A4205.04



C0270.02

The second perfin is c/AN/s, identified as C0270.02, in use over a much longer period (1885-1969). It was applied to the two adhesives (not the envelope) which were needed to upgrade the postage for

overseas mail, viz. a King Edward VII ½d green and a 1d red. Apparently the two dies were used at the same time, one for postage stamps and the other for postal stationary. This suggestion is corroborated by an earlier postal stationary wrapper in my possession. It is imprinted with Queen Victoria ½d brown, perfinned A4210.01 and postmarked SW/12.1.92/C.Z. (I have no idea what the C.Z. stands for – maybe one of the members can help).

The illustrated cover was posted in London on 21 September 1903 and back-stamped in Neuwelt, Bohemia two days later. The adhesives and the imprint were cancelled twice with a double obliterator/date stamp reading SW/52 on the oval barred obliterator portion. This number belonged to the Herne Hill P.O. in the London District according to G. Brumell “British P.O. Numbers” (1971).

Rosemary Smith (Bull 302 p. 14-17 and 303 p.19-21) gave an excellent overview of the Army and Navy Co-operative Society who were situated at 117 Victoria Street, London S.W. from 1872 onwards. This was a highly profitable enterprise, originally intended to supply groceries, stationary, drapery, perfumery, fancy goods, tailoring and a wide range of services to members at cut prices. The Society eventually expanded into various manufacturing activities and “The Stores” were opened to the public. They even had depots in Bombay, Karachi and Calcutta. Rosemary commented: “Was there anything they did not provide?”

I think it is safe to assume that the Harrach Glass Works in Neuwelt, Bohemia (today Nový Svět in the Czech Republic) was one of the Society’s suppliers. But what on earth did they need to import that British industry could not provide? The answer is, of course, “Bohemian Glass”.

This term is often used to describe 19th Century faceted and engraved, bright-coloured beakers, bowls, goblets and vases that were available throughout Europe and elsewhere. Such items often fetch high prices on auction nowadays.



Harrach Glass Works Today

A brief look on the internet revealed that Neuwelt Glassworks (est. 1630 and bought by Count Harrach in 1763) claims to be the second oldest in Bohemia, although glass production existed in the region since the 14th century. Amazingly, the factory is still in production today, as a private firm under the name “Sklárna Novosad & Syn Harrachov s.r.o.” The company was nationalised in 1945 and bought out by a former glassworker, František Novosad, in 1993. In 2002 a small brewery and a restaurant were added to attract tourists. The glassworks is fully functional and uses the traditional techniques in its 100 year old historical cutting room whose original equipment is powered by water turbines. Production is oriented to “luxurious sets of drinking glasses, decorative glasses and crystal cut chandeliers.”

Perhaps Harrach glassware with British regimental colours or insignia are to be found that emanated from the Co-operative Society around the turn of the century. There is no evidence in the Catalogue of Perfins of Czechoslovakia (Fejtek 1987, 1994) that Harrachs ever used perfins.